



# Georgia Farm Service Agency Newsletter

October 2004

United States Department of Agriculture

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## Women in Agriculture Celebration

Women in agriculture from a three-county area, Greene, Hancock and Taliaferro, attended an open house at the Farm Service Agency (FSA) Office in Greensboro on August 26<sup>th</sup>, Women's Equality Day. Barbara Jackson, County Executive Director, and Marcia Lawrence, Program Technician, hosted the event in honor of the women farmers served by the Greene County FSA Office.

Women have long played a significant role in farming, but often in supporting jobs from picking crops and milking cows to bookkeeping. An aging population, love of the land, quality of life on the farm, and Americans' growing interest in specialty farms, such as herbs, goats, organic vegetables and agritourism are driving more women into owning and managing farms. The latest Census of Agriculture by the U.S. Government shows a 12 percent increase in the number of farms run by women in Georgia.



Lynn Dover returned to the family farm, Jefferson Hall Farm, in Union Point after her father's death in 1999 and took over as operator. She grew up on the farm, working alongside her father raising beef cows, dairy calves, miniature horses, donkeys, parakeets and cockatiels which were sold to pet stores. She attributes the driving force in the operation's success to her father. "I was taught well by my father. He expected a lot and I worked right alongside him until I married and left home."

The current operation includes some 20 commercial beef cows, (in restocking process) 41 miniature horses and 27 donkeys. When asked what she enjoys most about farming she said, "I just love being around the animals and taking care of them." The miniature horses and donkeys are popular

at the Southland Jubilee Festival every year and the donkeys are often used in nativity scenes at Christmas. Dover says FSA's Livestock Assistance Program (LAP) was very helpful in 2002, following the severe drought.

Judy Hodnett, Chairperson of the Greene County FSA Committee, grew up on the family farm in White Plains known as the Bickers Farm which has been in the family for around 100 years. Hodnett's first memory of farm chores was raking hay when she was about 7 years old. She helped with her father's dairy operation, and her grandfather's country store and his cotton, oat, and wheat crops.



After her father retired in 1980, Hodnett began operating the farm. She raises beef cattle, miniature horses, hay, and timber on some 1,025 acres, partially rented. She has 50 head of cattle, after selling some over the summer because of drought conditions, and 50 miniature horses. The cash crop is hay from 450 acres.

Hodnett has participated in the Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) and Livestock Assistance Program (LAP) during periods of drought over the years. This helped to buy hay and supplement the lost income. When the tornadoes came through in 1992, more than 100 acres were flattened, and she received Emergency Conservation Program (ECP) cost-share assistance to replace 2 miles of fencing and replant pines.

When asked if she would stay on the farm until retirement, Hodnett said, "I hope I can stay on the farm until I take my last breath. I just love being out under God's sky."

More and more women are learning that they can compete on the farm, earning the same pay as their male counterparts. With new farm equipment, technology, and creative approaches, the number of women farmers is expected to continue its upward trend.

# Director's Message

2002 Farm Bill Working Well for Georgia Farmers

In the middle of the third crop year following passage of the 2002 Farm Bill signed by President Bush in May 2002, this Farm Bill seems to be hitting the mark for Georgia Farmers. The 2002 Farm Bill ushered in big changes for farmers and the Farm Service Agency.

One of the biggest changes facing Georgia farmers was the 2002 Peanut Buyout Program. At that time we were unsure as to exactly how much this new, open, more market oriented program would affect Georgia Peanut Producers. Judging by the increased investment in both increased acreage and new peanut warehouses the effect has been very positive. With final acreage reports now available across the state, Georgia shows an increase of nearly 80,000 acres in peanut production. ***This is huge.*** The percentage increase in acres is about 15%, going from 536,766 in 2003 to 614,250 acres in 2004. Any producer can now grow peanuts in the state of Georgia and receive a marketing loan if needed. Because of this now more open program FSA personnel in counties who had never seen peanuts in the county, much less a marketing loan, are now adeptly handling new processes to serve new peanut producers in their area. As peanut producers and processors encourage Congress to refine or adjust the Peanut program to meet current marketing needs, FSA personnel will be there to help every step of the way.

The new Farm Bill also called for more dollars and more programs to focus on critical conservation measures. President Bush recently announced early re-enrollment for CRP acreage expiring in the next few years and a new sign-up for CRP acres that just ended. Another conservation program you can read about in this newsletter includes the Bobwhite Quail Initiative. All of these programs are a product of the 2002 Farm Bill.

Other behind the scenes changes are being made as well. Georgia was recently approved to begin digitizing maps which will give us the ability to more quickly and accurately measure farms and fields electronically. A new position was created to help implement and manage these new capabilities in every FSA service center and FSA is fortunate to welcome Stephanie Brown as GIS Specialist for that purpose.

The Farm Bill has been flexible enough to meet new production challenges while helping provide a safety net for the farming community. The conservation titles are helping to assure that our sensitive agricultural lands will remain intact and keep both wildlife and soil in place. No law can or ever will take the risk out of farming, however this new legislation has gone a long way toward ensuring a more productive and profitable agriculture.

Most importantly we appreciate the cooperation and teamwork shown by the thousands of farmers across the state and the hundreds of farmers who serve on county committees to implement these new programs. Without your willingness to serve and assist, the local FSA team absolutely could not get the job done.

Sincerely,



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## Farm Loan Teams at Your Service

Presently, there are 11 farm loan program offices throughout Georgia. Each "farm loan team" is supervised by a Farm Loan Manager. Together with Farm Loan Officers and support staff, Agency Farm Loan Managers administer the FSA loan programs in all 159 Georgia counties. On average, each farm loan team serves just over 14 counties. Listed below are the locations of each loan team:

Location	Phone	Farm Loan Manager
USDA-FSA 102 Church Street Byron, Georgia	478-956-6484	Calvin L. Hyer
USDA-FSA 717 South Wall Street Suite 1 Calhoun, Georgia	706-629-2311	Rita D. Brooks
USDA-FSA 150 West Street Colquitt, Georgia	229-758-5541	J. Steve Griffin
USDA-FSA 1458 Ila Road Commerce, Georgia	706-335-8111	B. Dan Childs, Jr.
USDA-FSA 955 Forrester Drive Dawson, Georgia	229-995-5811	William S. Coley, Jr.
USDA-FSA 703 E. Ward Street Douglas, Georgia	912-384-4811	Judy F. Kight
USDA-FSA 230 Foster Street Suite B Eastman, Georgia	478-374-9602	Mitchell G. Willcox
USDA-FSA 130 Sparta Hwy Eatonton, Georgia	706-485-2341	Lori Ann Branch
USDA-FSA 406 Green Street Louisville, Georgia	478-625-3735	Samuel C. Baker
USDA-FSA 350 Veterans Pkwy, N. Building 3, Room 102 Moultrie, Georgia	229-985-3176	P. L. Jowers, III
USDA-FSA 151 Langston Chapel Rd Suite 400 Statesboro, Georgia	912-871-2610	James R. Evans

## Important Dates calendar for FSA Programs

### County Committee Elections:

8-Nov Ballots mailed to eligible voters  
6-Dec Last day to return ballots  
1-Jan Elected Committee members take office

### Flue-Cured Tobacco Redesignation Periods:

27-Sep thru 1-Oct Eligible to sell October 1  
1-Nov thru 5-Nov Eligible to sell November 15

### Direct and Counter-Cyclical Program (DCP):

1-Aug Final date to request reconstitution of DCP farm.  
30-Sep Final date to sign DCP contract (\$100 late fee).

### NAP Insurance Sales Closing Dates:

30-Sep Barley, canola, oats, wheat per FCIC.  
20-Nov Apples, blueberries, peaches, pecans per FCIC.  
1-Dec Honey.

### Emergency Loans:

9-Oct Emergency loans deadline for designation S1852  
13-Oct Emergency loan deadline for designation M1509

### Conservation & Compliance:

24-Sep CRP-29 General Signup deadline  
30-Sep Final availability date for Trade Assistance Production for Shrimp and Catfish  
1-Oct Sign-up begins for Conservation Reserve Program- Bobwhite Quail Habitat Initiative  
1-Oct EQIP- Environmental Quality Incentives Program responsibilities transferred to NRCS

### FSA Offices closed on the following holidays:

11-Oct Columbus Day  
11-Nov Veteran's Day  
25-Nov Thanksgiving Holiday  
24-Dec Christmas Holiday  
31-Dec New Year's Eve

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# Conservation & Compliance Programs

Clark Weaver, Section Chief

## Conservation Reserve Program – Bobwhite Quail Habitat Initiative



In many parts of the nation, the Bobwhite Quail population has dropped due primarily to loss of habitat. A new CRP Practice (CP33, Habitat Buffers for Upland Birds) will be used to provide food and cover for quail, upland birds, and other species. Nationally the limit for enrollment is 250,000 acres. The acreage for enrollment in Georgia is 8,600 acres.

Northern bobwhite quail are a native quail species with an historic range in 35 states. The birds are a valued inhabitant of farm landscapes, an important aspect of rural culture, and are a key to the heritage of hunting. However, the bobwhite quail population has declined from an estimated 59 million birds in 1980 to about 20 million in 1999. Their habitats are disappearing due to urbanization, increased grassland cultivation, and a transitioning of once grassy fields into woods and forests.

FSA estimates that the nesting and brood-rearing cover created by the initiative will increase bobwhite quail numbers by 750,000 annually. Planted buffers will also benefit reptiles, aquatic species, and upland birds, many of which are being considered for listing as endangered species. In addition, the initiative will reduce soil erosion and protect water quality by trapping field sediments and nutrients.

This practice will be offered as a CRP continuous signup practice meaning it will not have to go through the competitive bid process producer's use during a CRP general signup. The land must be suitably located and adaptable to the establishment of Bobwhite Quail. In addition the land will be required to meet the eligible cropland requirements meaning the land must have been cropped in 4 out of the 6 years 1996 through 2001.

The eligible land will be cropland around field edges suitable for quail. The minimum average width of the buffer for quail is 30 feet, with a maximum average width of 120 feet. The cropland eligibility requirement may be found at <http://www.fsa.usda.gov/pas/publications/facts/pubfacts.htm>. The enrollment period will begin **October 1, 2004** and will continue until the acreage limit is met or December 31, 2007 whichever comes first.

## Boll Weevil Eradication Program Expresses Appreciation to Cotton Producers

Due to great losses in the past, all Georgia cotton producers are required to participate in the Boll Weevil Eradication Program (BWEP). Through concerted efforts of the Farm Service Agency (FSA), the Georgia Department of Agriculture's Boll Weevil Eradication Program (BWEP), and you, Cotton Producers, elimination of the boll weevil as a cotton pest is becoming a reality.

Local FSA County Offices assist in administering BWEP by:

- accepting producers' cotton acreages reports on Cotton Acreage Reporting Form
- providing APHIS representatives with photocopies of aerial photographs with cotton fields identified
- collecting assessment fees from cotton producers
- transmitting assessment fees to the proper State assessment authority.

The folks at BWEP would like to extend to you, the cotton growers, a very special thank you for your continued cooperation. They have expressed appreciation not only for your reporting acreages correctly and paying assessment fees timely, but for other aspects of the total program, which includes awareness of those green collection traps placed on roadside-accessible cotton fields to collect and monitor boll weevil beetles. These collection devices are very crucial to monitoring and BWEP representatives thank you for taking precautions to not destroy the traps and for your cooperation and efforts for a positive impact on cotton production.

Also, we at FSA would like to express our appreciation to BWEP for what their representatives do for us. For the past couple of years, BWEP field representatives have stepped in to help FSA County Offices take intended acreage reports and map cotton fields.

## Environmental Quality Incentives Program – EQIP

Effective October 1, 2004 EQIP responsibilities are transferred to the Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS). Please direct any and all questions regarding EQIP to the local NRCS office.



# Price Support

*Clark Weaver, Section Chief*

## **Peanut Marketing Assistance Loans**

Peanut Marketing Assistance Loans provide interim financing for producers not ready to sell their crop. The nonrecourse loan allows the producer to store his peanut production in a Commodity Credit Corporation (CCC) approved warehouse and pledge the commodity for loan. The loan assists the producers with “cash flow”. This allows the producer when prices are usually lower to pay his debts without having to sell his crop. Loans are not assignable but are subject to lien searches. CCC must have first lien on the crop in order to process loan request.

Once marketing becomes more favorable, the producer may repay the loan and sell his peanuts. If the producer cannot find a buyer for the peanuts or prices are still low, he may forfeit this loan. In this situation, Commodity Credit Corporation becomes the owner of the pledged commodity and the loan is deemed as paid in full. However, any storage charges prior to the CCC document received date will still be owed by the producer.

To be eligible for Loans the producer must:

- ✓ Share in the risk of producing the peanuts
- ✓ Retain beneficial interest
- ✓ Report all cropland acreage on the farm
- ✓ Compliant with HELC/WC

## **Peanut Loan Deficiency Payments**

A producer which is eligible to obtain a loan, but who agrees to forgo the loan, may obtain a Loan Deficiency Payment (LDP). The basic LDP rate is the rate in effect on the day of the request. The Adjusted World Price must be less than the national loan rate. LDP's may be certified or measured and must be requested on a CCC-633 LDP prior to the final loan availability date which is January 31 following the year in which the peanuts were harvested. LDP requests may not be cancelled and are not subject to premium or discounts. LDP's are assignable.

Additional information may be obtained at your local FSA office or the FSA website: [www.fsa.usda.gov](http://www.fsa.usda.gov). Under **Information for...** click on **Fact Sheets**, Peanut Marketing Assistance Loans and Loan Deficiency Payments.

# Production Adjustment

*Ronald Carey, Section Chief*

## **Reporting Farm Changes**

It is the producer's responsibility to notify FSA of ANY changes in their farming operation or entity status throughout the year. Changes that may affect a determination include, but are not limited to a change in contract shares of a contract which may reflect change of land lease from cash rent to share rent or from share rent to cash rent; modification of a variable/fixed bushel rent arrangement; a change in the size of the producer's farming operation by the addition or deletion of a farm; a change in the structure of the farming operation, including any change in the member's shares; a change in the contributions of farm inputs of capital, equipment, active personal labor, or active personal management; and a change of farming interest not previously disclosed on CCC-502 or update, including the farming interests of a spouse or minor child.



## **Tobacco Marketing Cards**

Tobacco marketing cards are issued for each farm with planted acreage. Use of your card to identify and sell tobacco from another farm is a violation and could result in penalties and reduction of allotment in future years. Check your marketing card after each sale to make sure the sale has been recorded properly. Errors on cards causing you to sell in excess of 103% of the effective quota for your farm are subject to a penalty at the rate of \$1.39 per pound. Marketing cards must be returned to the issuing county office following completion of marketing.

## **Reporting Unmarketed Tobacco**

Tobacco harvested but not marketed must be reported to FSA on form MQ-108-1. Producers are required to notify FSA before destroying or disposing of harvested tobacco in quantities of 500 pounds or more. An FSA representative must witness the disposition.

# Farm Loan Programs

David Laster, Section Chief

## Real Estate For Sale

The FSA real estate for sale web site provides an online guide to Government-owned real estate and potential foreclosure sales information, which includes farm/ranch properties, houses, lots, and buildings. This site provides access to detailed information about each of the properties and links to other USDA web sites providing a variety of services. <http://www.resales.usda.gov/>.

## Sale of Inventory Farmland

FSA advertises acquired farm property within 15 days of acquisition. Eligible beginning farmers and ranchers are given first priority to purchase these properties at the appraised market value for the first 135 days after acquisition. If more than one eligible beginning farmer or rancher offers to purchase the property, the buyer is chosen randomly.



## FLP Funding as of August 19, 2004

	Amount Obligated	Number Obligated	Un-obligated Balance
Direct Farm Operating	\$16,932,965	269	\$456,400
Direct Farm Ownership	\$1,074,200	6	\$0
Guaranteed Farm Operating	\$35,952,492	175	\$4,952,508
Guaranteed Farm Ownership	\$33,589,175	78	\$0

## Farm Loan Programs Funding: Frequently asked Questions

### Why does FSA occasionally run out of money?

Each year Congress appropriates money for FSA farm loans as part of the USDA budget. The funds are appropriated for the Government's fiscal year, which runs from October 1 until the following September 30<sup>th</sup>. The amount of money appropriated by Congress does not always meet the demand for loan funds for all loan programs.

### What does FSA do when States start to run out of loan funds?

When loan funds start to run low, the Agency will usually pool funds. Pooling is defined as taking unused loan money from States and placing it in a National Headquarters pool. By pooling, FSA is able to move money from areas where it is not being used to areas where it is needed.

### How does FSA allocate money to States to make loans?

The Agency allocates money based upon the *potential* need for it. Money is allocated to States based upon the number of farmers in each State, the value of farm assets, and net farm income. The biggest factor however, is the number of farmers in a State.

### Is money targeted or reserved for use by specific groups?

Yes, FSA reserves loan money for exclusive use by two specific groups: under-represented groups known as Socially Disadvantaged Applicants (SDA) and beginning farmers.

### When a loan program is out of money, should I still apply for a loan?

Yes!!! Even when money has run out for a loan program, FSA still accepts, processes, and approves loan applications. Approved loans are held until money becomes available. Actually, it is to your advantage to apply for a loan even when there is no money available. Loans are funded in a dated order, based on the date the application is received. Submitting an application sets your place in the waiting line for funds.

# Outreach Programs

*Mary Parker, Outreach Coordinator*

## **USDA Creates Voluntary Register to Reach Minority Producers**

The new voluntary USDA Minority Farm Register is an outreach tool to underserved farmers who may not be currently enrolled in USDA loan, farm or conservation programs.

### **How will the Register be used?**

The Register will create a shared outreach list that will help USDA, community-based organizations and minority-serving educational institutions to communicate with minority farmers and provide them with outreach materials, newsletters and program announcements. USDA will carefully control access to the Register.

### **Who May Apply?**

All minority persons involved in farming are encouraged to participate, including those whose name and farm records are already at the local USDA Service Center. Under the Privacy Act, one must voluntarily authorize release of name, race/ethnicity, and contact information before USDA can share it with other USDA-approved outreach partners.

### **Does signing the Register make a person eligible for USDA programs?**

No. Each agency within USDA has its own sign-up procedures and eligibility requirements. Persons wishing to sign up for a USDA program will need to contact the agency responsible for that program.

### **Does signing the Register make a person eligible to vote in FSA county committee elections?**

If a person is already a participant in an FSA program, they are eligible to vote in FSA county committee elections. If not and they are an owner, operator, tenant, or sharecropper, they may be eligible to vote – but they must go to their local FSA office to establish eligibility and to be placed on the list of voters. They should call ahead to determine what documents are needed. The location and phone number for local FSA offices can be found in the Federal Government section of local telephone books.

### **Where and How to Apply?**

Those wishing to join the register must sign and date an application that provides their name and address. Providing phone numbers, email address, race, ethnicity, gender and farm location will be voluntary, although the additional information increases the producer's opportunities for receiving appropriate assistance.

The Register application is available at local USDA Service Centers or from approved USDA outreach partners. Completed applications may be mailed to: Minority Farm Register, USDA Stop Code 0503, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington D.C. 20250-0503. The sign-up information is also be available on the FSA's Web site at [www.forms.sc.egov.usda.gov/eforms/mainervlet](http://www.forms.sc.egov.usda.gov/eforms/mainervlet) and on the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights' Web site at [www.usda.gov/cr](http://www.usda.gov/cr).



These are some of the attendees of the 'Women in Agriculture Celebration'. Other distinguished guests included Representative Sistie Hudson, Georgia House of Representatives- District 95, and Georgia Farm Bureau.

## **Free Workshop for Small, Beginning, and Limited Resource Farmers**

Team Agriculture Georgia (TAG) will host a free one-day Workshop for Small, Beginning, and Limited Resource Farmers at the Pettigrew Center, Fort Valley State University, Fort Valley, Georgia on **November 4, 2004**. Seminars to be conducted include A Primer for Selecting New Farm Enterprises; Aquaculture-Freshwater Shrimp; Beef Marketing; Organics-Introduction to Production and Marketing; Financing Small Farms; U-Pick/Roadside Markets-Getting Started and Improving Your Operation; Adding Value to Farm Products through Direct Marketing; Goats, Lamb, and Pastured Poultry; and Establishing a Small Nursery Operation. The following workshop topics will be presented entirely in **Spanish**: The Hopes & Fears of Farming and Housing Issues; Marketing Mix Decisions & Land Acquisitions; Safety and Pesticide Use.

For additional information or to register for the workshop, contact:

Sandra Daniel

Telephone: 478-825-6269

FAX: 478-825-6299

Email: [daniels@fvsu.edu](mailto:daniels@fvsu.edu)

Web site: [www.teamaggeorgia.com](http://www.teamaggeorgia.com)

Georgia Farm Service Agency  
355 E. Hancock Avenue, Stop 100  
Athens, Georgia 30601-2775

## *2002 Ag Census Released*

You might not remember it, but a while back you were asked to fill out the 2002 Agricultural Census for USDA's National Agricultural Statistics Service, or NASS. The report is now available, and if your family is among the 50 percent of farm families who, according to the census, have Internet access, you can view the report online.

- Among the census highlights:
- ✓ Ninety percent of farms are operated by an individual or family. The number of corporate farms declined by 18.4 percent from 1997 to 2002
  - ✓ The average age of principal farm or ranch operators was 55.3-years-old compared to 54-years-old in 1997. Results showed an average age of second operators at 49.4-years-old and third operators at 41.9-years-old.

To view or download 2002 Ag Census, visit <http://www.usda.gov/nass/>, and click on the "Census of Agriculture" link.